Katie

The Kite Runner—Pages 125-242

**Summary:** The second third of Khaled Hosseini’s book, *The Kite Runner*, has shifted its focus from Amir’s childhood, to more of recent time period in Amir’s life. From where I left off, Amir and Baba both escaped into America from Afghanistan. It was a fairly smooth escape from what I understand once they no longer needed to rely on the incompetent driver that was ferrying the refuges across the Afghan border because Amir immediately jumps into recalling the start of his and Baba’s life in America. The two, having no money or anywhere to live, found themselves rooming together in an old apartment in which several other Afghan refugees took refuge. Amir describes his love for America because it was a place where he could bury his memories; however he also described Baba’s distaste for this life because he went from being a wealthy and respected individual to someone who worked as many shifts as he could at a gas station. However, the one upside was that he and Baba got to spend a lot more time together because the two had begun to depend on each other.

Majority of the beginning of this second third was spent describing the trips Baba and Amir took to various yard sales so that they would have items to sell at their flea market stand every Saturday because it is at the flea market where Amir fell in love. One of Baba’s acquaintances, General Taheri, greeted them at their stand one day and caught up on old memories. Then he introduced Amir to his daughter Soraya Taheri and ever since that moment Amir could not stop thinking about her. He describes several situations in which he tried to approach her, but in the Afghan tradition a male was not allowed to address a female unless he had the intension ad permission to seek her hand in marriage. Even though he had the intension of doing so, he definitely did not have the General’s approval to do so.

Now during this love struck point of the book two other main events unfolded as well, Amir was now attending college and something was medically wrong with Amir’s father. The happier event unfolded after Amir finally graduated high school, at the age of twenty, and his father surprised him with his very own car with the understanding that Amir would be heading off to improve his education. Baba was hoping that Amir would be pursuing something that was fruitful like a businessman or doctor, but instead Amir finally stood his ground and told Baba that he wanted to pursue his one passion, writing. So Amir spends a lot of his time working and attending his college courses. The more depressing event, Baba developing a medical condition, was discovered by Amir when he found that his father was coughing up blood. It took several doctors to discover the problem, either because they were unable to find the cause of the event or because they were Russian in heritage, but they finally determined that it was an advance and inoperable cancerous tumor in his lung that had developed from the cigarette smoking habit that Baba had developed. However being the fearless and stubborn man that Baba was, he refused the treatments that would delay the growth of the tumor and continued on with his smoking habit.

As his father’s condition worsened, Amir finally got the guts to ask his father to arrange the approval of him and Soraya’s future wedding. Luckily for Amir, Soraya started to develop feelings for him and the General approved of Amir as a future son-in-law as well. The traditional Afghan rules of engagement were cut short so that Baba would be able to see his one and only son’s wedding. Soraya moved in with Amir and Baba because Baba’s illness had only continued to get worse and she wanted to take care of him while Amir was away at work. Things seemed to be working out for the trio for a while and Baba’s condition even seemed to improve a bit, until one morning he just didn’t wake up. Amir took his father’s death really hard because he knew that he wouldn’t have anyone looking over his shoulder and telling him what to do anymore.

After this point in the novel events begin to slow down. Amir discusses his discoveries about Soraya’s family because they spend a lot of time at their house and about how in a normal Afghan marriage he would know a lot of these discoveries already because there is a long period of engagement. Amir also speaks about how he misses his father and about his relationship with Soraya which is where the next upset comes in. Soraya ends up not being able to bear children and the pair begins discussing the option of adoption even though they both agree that they’d rather have a child that is of their flesh and blood.

It is after this upset that Amir receives a call from his old friend Rahim Khan, Baba’s old friend who lived with them in Afghanistan, in which Rahim Khan expresses the urgency of a face to face meeting. Amir sets out to Pakistan where Rahim Khan told him to find him and when the two meet once again, Rahim Khan is nothing like Amir remembers. He had grown much older, skinner, fragile, and unhealthy and expressed the need for Amir to listen to the story that he was about to tell him. After listening to his recap of the events that have occurred in the recent past, Amir had become aware of three important details. Hassan had been killed protecting his property, Hassan was in fact his half-brother, and Hassan’s son Sohrab was somewhere in Afghanistan and Rahim Khan’s dying wish is that Amir finds him. The end of this section is about Amir’s journey into Afghanistan to find his nephew Sohrab.

**Analysis:** This section of this book held the biggest surprise for me yet. I did not see Hassan being Amir’s half brother at all, even though now when I look back at the previous section there are some minor details that allude to this idea, but nothing that was blatantly obvious. But what I don’t understand however is how Ali, Hassan’s father, could stay in Baba’s house knowing that he had slept with his wife or how he could raise Baba’s illegitimate son as his own? I’m pretty sure I would be furious and wouldn’t want anything to do with that man. The other thing I don’t understand is that no one told either Amir or Hassan the truth. Baba took that secret to the grave, but it wasn’t even something that I’d consider that horrible. Perhaps, he didn’t want Amir’s perception of him to be tarnished seeing as how he would have had to of slept with Hassan’s mother at around the same time he slept with his own wife in order for the two boys to be born at around the same time.

Regardless, Rahim Khan kind of dropped this big secret on Amir immediately after he requested that he find Hassan’s son. Talk about being black mailed because not only is finding this child a dying man’s wish, but now this child is family and Amir should feel extremely obligated to find him. Now I know that Rahim Kan only wants Amir to bring Sohrab back to Pakistan since he has a family who is more than willing to take him in, but I’m kind of getting the feeling that Amir is going to take Sohrab back to America to live with him and Soraya. The two have already discussed the option of adoption and even better, Sohrab is blood related so it should remove the other concern.

**Application:** Last time I chose cowardice and loyalty as the two prominent inherent human characteristics and even though they both still obviously apply, I would like to choose the characteristic of deceptive this time. Even if people deceive others for a good cause, such as keeping a surprise party a secret, it’s still being used. However, the common way to look at the characteristic of deception would be to association it with lying which is what is expressed in this book while Amir was being raised; Ali, Baba, and Rahim Khan all decided for some reason that it would be beneficial for the children if they lied about Hassan’s father.